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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

More About Food Budgets

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A radio interview between Ruth Van Deman, Home Economics, and Morse Salisbury, Radio Service, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour Thursday, October 7, 1937, and broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 70 associated radio stations.

--ooOoo--

MORSE SALISBURY:

Here's our Household Calendar coming up first thing. And as usual your guide, philosopher, and friend, Ruth Van Deman is here to take over. Ruth, shall we pick up our continuity where we left off last week?

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

That suits me fine. Continuity is my middle name.

SALISBURY:

Well, you remember, I was opening up the subject of food budgets again.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I remember.

SALISBURY:

I was interested to hear more about your friends Mr. and Mrs. Young Homemaker. I suppose they are having to make some readjustments in their budget.

VAN DEMAN:

A few. Not very many. If a budget's made properly in the first place, there's some room in it for slight adjustments.

SALISBURY:

Cushioned somewhat to help it take the bumps.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, that's what a budget is. A kind of financial cushion to take the shocks. A spending plan, a general guide, to help proportion your money right to get from it what you want most. But look at these figures on food prices, Morse. I had a copy run off for you, so we can both follow them.

SALISBURY:

"Changes in retail prices of food, by commodity groups, for the United States, as of September 14, 1937." Say these figures are rather surprising in view of what you hear about food going up. These figures indicate that the price of food in general wasn't up very much, in September, that is, comparing this year with last.

VAN DEMAN:

No, the total jump for all common foods is only 1.7 per cent for September as compared with the same time in 1937. But lets get this perfectly clear, Morse. These are figures for the United States as a whole. They represent prices of 84 foods taken in retail stores in 51 cities and then averaged.

SALISBURY:

I understand. They don't make allowance for local fluctuations in price. Of course, we all know there are big differences in price in different cities in different parts of the country.

VAN DEMAN:

And even in stores in the same place. That's why a woman has to watch quality as well as price when she goes marketing.

SALISBURY:

Certainly. Now, looking at these figures by groups, - cereals, meats, fruits, and vegetables, and so on-- I'm interested to see where the price rises and drops really are.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, the biggest rise of course is in meats. They're up a little over 14 per cent higher than September a year ago.

SALISBURY:

But fruits and vegetables are down, definitely, especially the fresh ones. They're nearly 20 per cent under what they were last September.

VAN DEMAN:

And with the big crop of apples and potatoes and some other fruits and vegetables I suppose that will tend to be the case right through the fall and into the winter.

SALISBURY:

Dairy products in September were still below prices of a year ago, but some other things have edged up a little.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, cereals and bakery products had come up 3.3 percent and so have fats and oils.

SALISBURY:

Well, if these figures gave a picture of food prices where your young friends live --

VAN DEMAN:

I believe they do in a general way ---

SALISBURY:

Then they had to review their food budget upward about two per cent. Let me see, they were spending \$9.00 a week I think you said.

VAN DEMAN:

That's right. They'd allowed themselves \$9.00 a week for food.

SALISBURY:

And 2 per cent of \$9.00 is 18 cents as I figure it.

VAN DEMAN:

Check. You and I, Morse, seem to use the same multiplication table. But these young people haven't had to worry about the 18 cents yet. They were living well within their \$9.00. And now lets look for a minute at the kind of a diet they're buying with that \$9.00.

SALISBURY:

O.K. That's the milk in the coconut any way.

VAN DEMAN:

It certainly is as the Bureau of Home Economics is finding in its study of consumer purchases. It isn't what you spend for food, it's what you buy with the money you spend. That's what makes the difference between a good, well-balanced diet and one that doesn't do so much on the positive side for health and good nutrition. But take the diet pattern my young friends are following, from Dr. Stiebeling's bulletin on, "Diets to Fit the Family Income."

SALISBURY:

Did you bring along an extra copy so I could follow along on that too?

VAN DEMAN:

You take this one. I know it practically by heart. Turn over to the liberal diet. Page 6, I think.

SALISBURY:

I have it.

VAN DEMAN:

There's the general lay out, starting with milk.

SALISBURY:

Milk - one pint for each adult, daily.

VAN DEMAN:

My friends do better than that. They have a quart apiece every day.

SALISBURY:

They evidently rely on milk as one of the protective foods.

VAN DEMAN:

Along with plenty of vegetables and fruits. They always start with fruit for breakfast and often end up with a glass of orange juice just before they go to bed. Every day they eat six to seven servings of fruits and vegetables.

SALISBURY:

That ought to take care of their vitamins all right. And do they use 4 to 6 eggs a week, as this suggests?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, they average 4 to 6 eggs including those used in cooking.

SALISBURY:

And meat, fish, or poultry once a day?

VAN DEMAN:

Sometimes twice, counting in the meat in his sandwiches for lunch.

SALISBURY:

That's right. I suppose the good old ham sandwich does rate as a meat at the noon meal.

VAN DEMAN:

And the bread and butter help round out the calories.

SALISBURY:

Yes, this says -- "butter at every meal," and "bread, cereals, and desserts as needed to meet calorie requirements, or as desired so long as they do not displace the protective foods."

VAN DEMAN:

A very good working plan, don't you think?

SALISBURY:

I do. Very sane and sensible and easy to follow. It reminds me of something I came across in a magazine the other day. I copied it down to give to you -- Which pocket did I put that in --

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe it's in the coat that went to the cleaners --

SALISBURY:

No. Here it is -- "A woman who tempers vitamins with good sense, calories with low food costs, and nutritious meals with 'good tastes,' will always have the family at her beck and call."

VAN DEMAN:

Excellent. I'd like to give that to Dr. Stiebeling.

SALISBURY:

Give it to her, with my compliments.

VAN DEMAN:

It's certainly the philosophy she's worked into her bulletin on "Diets to Fit the Family Income."

SALISBURY:

And thank you, Ruth, for bringing us this interesting report on the food budget today. We'll be looking for you again next Thursday. And for the benefit of any one who wants to start a food budget, or check over the old one to see how it lines up with ideas of the nutrition experts, I'll repeat the title of the bulletin Miss Van Deman mentioned. "Diets to Fit the Family Income." It outlines four diets at different levels of cost. At the top is the liberal diet. Then one at moderate cost. And so on down the scale to a restricted diet for emergency use only. The bulletin, "Diets to Fit the Family Income," gives all four of these plans for families of different size and make up, with and without children.

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